PRESS CONFERENCE:

Major General Douglas Stone, Deputy Commanding General, Detainee Operations, Multi-National Force—Iraq

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REP1-REP8: Unidentified Reports

MG STONE As-Salāmu `Alaykum. (Speaking in Arabic)

INT Peace be upon you. Welcome to you. I thank you for allowing me to have this chance to talk to you today. I am Major General Douglas Stone, the General Commander of Detainee Operations. The MNFI have…the Commander of the MNFI Detainee Operations in Iraq. I am very happy to please -- I'm pleased to meet you today, and I would like to discuss with you the detainee operations.

MG STONE (Resumes in English.) I would like to take some time today and show you some slides which highlight some of the positive trends in three particular and critical areas. First, the capture and the release rates; the detainee-on-detainee violence; and finally, the recapture rates themselves. I'm convinced that these metrics indicate that we are succeeding within the battlefield of the mind against Taqfirists by a powering and allying with the moderate detainees in order to marginalize the violent extremists. But first, let me step back so that I can provide you with the basic overview of the process, from why we detain civilians to the programs that we offer in the facilities which ultimately prepare moderate detainees for release and reintegration back into the Iraqi society. After that, I look forward to your questions.

First of all, we have the right to detain because the Government of Iraq gives us that right. It is under the United Nations Security Council Resolution, and the Government of Iraq provides the coalition the authority and the responsibility to

detain individuals who are deemed threatening or dangerous to the country of Iraq. This removes them from the greater population, and it tends to promote stability while reducing violence and contributing significantly to Iraq's overall security in the near term.

Building towards long-term security requires that we engage our detainees and that we enable reconciliation that ultimately sets the conditions for reintegration of the predominance of the internees back into the Iraqi society. So we therefore employ counselors, psychiatrists, Iraqi clerics, teachers and others to determine the education level, the occupational skills, the motivation and morale of the detainees. This allows us to determine how best to relate to detainees, and it helps us identify and isolate the extremists from the remaining population.

We offer basic education, pay-for-work programs, vocational training, religious discussion classes, family visitation—all of which together enable the development of good citizenship, and they deter released detainees from rejoining the fight. All our detainees go before a case record review board, followed then by Multinational Force Review Committee every six months, often sooner—all in an effort to individually discuss their case. This interactive dialogue takes place between the detainee and the coalition force members. And it helps assess the recidivist potential of the detainee. But more importantly, it ensures that the Iraqi citizens have both a voice in the process, but a safe return of the detainees to their population.

As a point of reference, it's important to note that we currently have more than 23,000 individuals currently in custody. The size of today's population is clearly a consequence of the surge and of the increased kinetic operations; however, it's important to note that this appears…that this number appears to be declining due to a few key variables. You know, our post-surge intake every day was about 50 to 60 detainees. Compare that to 20 or 30 in April of 2007. Despite the influx of detainees over the past year, as shown in the previous slide, our release rate has now overtaken that of our intake rate as of February.

As the Multinational Forces Review Committee continues to release detainees who are no longer imperative security threats, we will continue to work diligently with the Multinational Corps of Iraq to help reintegrate those detainees back into their communities.

Providing the highest quality care and custody is our top priority for coalition operations. This includes preventing violence between individual members or groups within our detainee population. Our guard force is vigilant and proactive in this regard. And we have implemented procedures that should an attack occur, there will be an immediate response to defuse the situation. When the unfortunate attack does take place, the perpetrators of the violence are investigated by an Iraqi judge and persecuted (sic) in the Central Criminal Court of Iraq, which has dispersed justice fairly, but firmly, in the cases that we have referred to them before.

But as you can see from this slide, such incidents have declined dramatically since the end of 2007. Since enhancing our detainee assessment procedures as they come into detention, serious detainee-on-detainee attacks have all but ceased, and it is now been more than 17 weeks without such an incident at Cropper or Bucca detention facilities. In fact, current levels of violence of detainee-on-detainee are the lowest that I have ever seen during my more than a year in command.

Since September of 2007, after implementing our new engagement and assessment process, more than 6,000 individuals have been released under this new process. Only 12 have been recaptured and returned to the Theater Internment Facility. The release-to-recapture rate is extraordinary. Even as the total number of individuals released from U.S. custody has grown with time, our recapture figures continue to decline. But there are many factors to be considered here. The peace in many of the communities—brought on by the communities themselves—the support of the communities by the community and by our forces who have worked together to set an environment that will allow for the peaceful return of the detainees. And the pledge and the commitment of the detainees themselves to keep the peace. This is the lowest recapture rate for any seven-month period of the war despite the coalition's expanded capacity to detain more during this time frame. I want to conclude by emphasizing that throughout the duration of the process that I first described, there are a number of core principles that we are dedicated to upholding. Respecting individual dignity of each detainee is essential. This is not only a legal obligation, but a moral

responsibility that we have to the Iraqi people. We consider it of utmost importance. Care and custody is our greatest priority. In every case, we not only meet the standards required by international law, but we seek to provide exceptional understanding that successes begin and end with the manner in which the internees themselves are treated and the environment in which the experience of detention reflects the values of this culture and of those of the coalition. In this spirit, we provide detainees a level of medical care commensurate to that given U.S. personnel.

In this final slide, you will see photos of what we call a Modular Detainee Housing Unit, an MDHU, which we can use to segregate extremist detainees and curtail their access to large populations of the detainee groups. This is one way that we protect our population. Finally, I want to emphasize that we insist that there be full transparency in everything we do. A number of agencies—the International Red Cross, the Government of Iraq's own Ministry of Human Rights, the news media—have all visited on a periodic basis to observe, to inspect, to see our facilities. And in the case of the Ministry of Human Rights and the International Red Cross, to meet and discuss the conditions of detention with every detainee. We will continue to ensure that we are open and that all that we do remains within the boundaries of international law. And with that, I would like to open it to your questions. Thank you.

BROOKS Brad Brooks with the Associated Press. Just have a question. Is…are you guys

holding anyone right now who the Iraqi government might have granted amnesty to under the amnesty law? And if so, is…why…why are you still holding them? And then I just wanted your opinion on whether that, in effect, acts as a veto over that Iraqi law.

MG STONE It's a good question. The amnesty law in general was directed at the population of the prisons in Iraq under the Iraqi law and the court system. It turns out that due to space allocations, we are holding for Iraq a little more than 700 of the Iraqi prisoners. In the coming months, they will be transferred from Iraqi…from U.S. detention into the new space that's being available. Each of those prisoners has the opportunity for a review and would clearly come under the amnesty law, and that review is taking place. The second way in which we are reviewing our obligation under the amnesty law is that we are taking a look at every case that is pending on a detainee who would otherwise…would…might be going into the Iraqi court system, and every case that applies in that regard is being reviewed as if it were to be applicable for the amnesty law. So that's the ways in which we look at it. The majority of detainees are being held under the U.N. Security Council Resolution, and they're held under a different process that is very direct. They are viewed by the Corps at the time of their apprehension, as an imperative security risk. If they go through the review processes, they could end up at the Theater Internment Facility. But actually a very small number of all those really end up at the Theater Internment Facility. Those that are held go through a separate process that would be outside of the amnesty law because they're not

inside the Iraqi law, and they, too, are being reviewed for release. And today those boards, run by the same individuals who were involved with the detention in the first place, make a decision…a judgment…as to whether or not the individual is any longer a risk—an imperative risk—and then they make the decision to release them. So in all cases, the Iraqi government's wishes are extended for those where the law applies in a very aggressive fashion, and for all those where the U.N. Security Resolution authority also granted to us by the Government of Iraq, is reviewed. We aggressively look at it that way.

BROOKS So you could hold them, though…of these 700, you could hold…you could continue to hold them even though they were granted amnesty, yes?

MG STONE No. We have no intent to hold a detainee, or a prisoner in this case, if their case is granted…I'm sorry…applies to the amnesty law and somebody goes through their process about application. In fact, we've actually helped with advancing those causes by discussing that with many of those that we're holding, that they may well be a candidate for amnesty. So I think we're facilitating that. Yes, ma'am?

CHON Gina Chon, Wall Street Journal. I was wondering what your reaction was to the recent U.N. Human Rights report in terms of concerns they expressed with detainees in terms of the increasing number of juveniles they're seeing in detention and some of the other concerns they raised, and also their inability to

actually go and observe the detainee facilities. And then my other question was also: Do you know the average length of how long a detainee is held for? Thanks.

MG STONE Let me answer the last question first. The average to date is about 331 days in the Theater Internment Facility. That's the average today. The first part…or the question about the U.N. article. We read that. We have an on-going conversation with them. This is really a U.S. policy issue. The United States believes when you're in a condition as we are now at war, that the Geneva policies generally apply, and we use the International Red Cross as the oversight agency. So they come in; they are permitted—given that they've signed a confidentiality agreement—and they engage with all the detainees. They interview them at their leisure whenever they want to, and we facilitate that. So, as a matter of U.S. policy, that's the process that we use. We would be open to visitation by the U.N. We work with them very closely in other cases throughout the country. But it's just as a matter of process that's what we do. I read the report, and we comply with, we believe strongly in, and we support the U.N.'s charter. We have many other activities that are actually under me that are outside of detention, where we engage with them on a continuous basis. I, too, am deeply concerned about al-Qaeda, in particular, use of youth. Although we have been able to get ahold of this problem, we used to have almost 900 who were 17 and under. Today we are about 500. We've cut that in half. We have a completely dedicated school for the youth—separate counselors, separate teachers. I had a chance to go out and speak

to every class this last week. These are youth that al-Qaeda has largely recruited into the…into their…into their desires. We are working with them, and we are very pleased at the results and the release rate. So I do share with the U.N. concerns as it relates to specifically the topics that we have—a great organization, and one that we comply with, but the issue of visitation is really an issue of policy, has something to do very different outside of us, and were it that the U.S. decided that's what they want to do, we'd be…we'd be happy. Yes, sir.

KIMURA My name is Kimura from Kyodo News, Japanese wire company. My understanding is that out of this 23,000 detainees, only 1,720 have been categorized as al-Qaeda in Iraq members after your screening and whatsoever. Would you tell us what it means in details? My impression is the vast majority of the detainees or the threat to Iraq, they…in fact, they have nothing to do with al-Qaeda. Does it mean…is this what it means?

MG STONE Thank you for the question. The concept of al-Qaeda is one that is not easy. A detainee does not walk in and show you a card and say, "I'm a member of al-Qaeda." So you go through an elaborate process of interrogation and understanding who they are, where they came from, what activities they're involved with, and then make a determination. And it's actually a little higher than that. It's just under 2,000 that we have designated al-Qaeda members. But it's important to understand that the Taqfirist mentality—and particularly on the street of al Qaeda—is often the same word, no difference between al-Qaeda and

Taqfirists. And we have more than 7,000, who, even by their own admission, would be considered Taqfirist. So, you're looking at a number north of 9,000 who have a very rigorous view of an ideology that we would broadly categorize as al-Qaeda. Now, other members of the detainee population have been engaged by the forces because they're done something counter-coalition. Where their allegiances are, how they were being paid, if they were being paid—all those are issues that go through a debate. But they clearly were recognized by the coalition forces as somebody for whom they had deep concerns about their being involved with as an imperative security risk. But when they come through the process, they go through our engagement…personal engagement. It is many of those who actually then go back into society and who are part of the numbers that I showed you earlier. Yes, sir.

DAGHER Sam Dagher with the Christian Science Monitor. Thank you for the opportunity. I have a couple of questions, if I may ask them separately. First, obviously, your efforts and what you're trying to accomplish and how it fits into the greater picture of national reconciliation and correction and all of that…if you'll allow me just to, maybe, offer a brief introduction. Obviously there are now about 50,000 prisoners. You have almost half of them in your facilities. A lot of them have not been charged with anything yet, at least the ones you're holding. And I'm told by Iraqi officials that I met with that almost three quarters of the people they're holding have not been charged, either. So, in this framework there's a new law that's called "amnesty." And the people who drafted it say it's not even amnesty; I

mean, only a saint would be released because of all the, you know, exceptions that are, you know, that are included in that law. So, what's being done now is the release of people who have not been convicted of any crime or just held on suspicion of involvement in the insurgency. Those people are being released at the moment, and it's being called "amnesty." You have…you have all sorts of programs in your facilities, but the people that are being released are embittered, upset. A lot of people that we met with have no jobs. The government is doing nothing to…to…to…to integrate them back into the society, and they want to carry out attacks. So…

MG STONE Let's…Let me help you parse this just a little bit. First of all, there are only 23,000 civilian internees in detention. And I want to be clear: They are not prisoners. You see, in my jargon—and this word is a little complicated, (Arabic words) in Arabic, but a prisoner is somebody who has gone through a court system. His case has been adjudicated. A sentence has been given to him, and they've gone into a prison. And that's a corrections system. What U.S. coalition forces detention is is under a different charter. The U.N. Security Council Resolution that says, "Is this individual an imperative security risen to the forces on the ground, the Iraqi population on the ground?" And if it's deemed that they are in their judgment, then they're brought into detention. So in our case, it's judgment that got them in there, and it's judgment that gets them out. And that's why our release rates are oftentimes quite a bit higher than anything else; they don't stay for a 30-year sentence or anything. They're in there…and the average

might be 331, but that means there's a lot getting out a lot sooner. So about 10 percent, on average, of all coalition internees have evidence that would be processed—or could be processed—into the Iraqi judicial system. And we have a very active engagement. Because the Government of Iraq wants us not to ever release criminals. So we work hard to take that evidence and push it into the Iraqi court system. And there's a very robust process to do that. I will have to tell you that we invite the press every month to a ceremonial release, though we release every day, and we do that so that you have a chance to talk to the detainees. And to date, there have been more than three thousand detainees released through that process alone, that the press has been able to talk to as they so choose. And so, I would take issue with how you sort of frame it. And I understand the sort of visceral com-…piece…piece of this, but I want to be clear: Detainees are out of a different system. They might go into the legal system. They are engaged with us. and the motivations for how they got there, perhaps, are oftentimes overlapped. But at the end of the day, it is a different system. And as you saw, our numbers are beginning to come down in a cautious and appropriate fashion, such that those that are released into the society are not a threat to the society, not a threat to themselves. And in most cases, would now more than…my numbers are a little off—but three or four thousand who have accredited school degrees. They're better off to compete in the society and to go forward. Yes, sir.

REP1 (Speaking in Arabic)

INT Hamid (inaudible) from Sawa Radio. Sir, the vice president, Tariq al-Hashimi, had said that they had an agreement with you to increase the number of released under this release program. Is that true? My other question, sir: Can you give us the number of the detainees that are foreign…foreign fighters that are from neighboring countries or from other countries. And please identify or give us the number…how many of the elderly and children? Thank you. Juvenile or children.

MG STONE Our good friend, Vice President Hashimi and I, along with many other of the leadership of this country talk about detention all the time. And I know that the vice president has deep concerns about those, and he has helped us many times understand the role of detainees getting themselves in detention. I've shared with him my programs—our programs. And back in the Eid ceremonies, we did work out arrangements. But on balance, the current release is really a function of the review boards that are conducted. We will take that number as high as the review boards feel that they want it to be, and the number of detainees are ready to go back to society. But I would say that we express the desire to release those that are no longer an imperative security risk with all of the leadership of this…of this country. There are about 240 third-country nationals in U.S. coalition detention. All of the others are Iraqi. The juveniles in detention…and I apologize, I don't have the exact number, but it's a little bit more than 500 today, and…did I miss any part of your question? Did you ask something else, please?

REP1 (Speaking in Arabic)

INT If you could, sir, could I know what the nationalities are? There was a…there was a statistic that came out that Egypt was…the highest number of the foreign fighters are from Egypt. Is this still the same or has that changed?

MG STONE I apologize. I don't have the exact numbers in front of me today, and I'll be glad to take this question after I can give you the exact question…the exact answer. So, if we could take that afterwards. I'd rather be right and clear for you than get on the subject here wrong. Yes, sir.

REP2 (Speaking in Arabic)

INT Al-Mada paper. Could we…could we know the number of detainees that have…I think had violence against them by the Taqfirists in detention? Also, between the agreement between and the MNF-I as my colleague had said, there are officials in the Iraqi government that said that they are going to…they are going to at the end of this year transfer responsibility for the Iraqi detention…American detention center, MNF-I detention centers to the Iraqis; is this true?

MG STONE Let me handle the question. The number of detainee-on-detainee incidents that are a result of ideological extremism is reasonably small. I'm…I know of at least five cases that would…we would…in the last year we would clearly wrap into

that category. So, the number is quite small, and I can give you the specifics of that afterwards when we consult. But it's not a big number. But when it's…when it happens, it's a very serious matter. As it relates to the negotiations that are currently underway, the United States of America and the Government of Iraq are dealing on a broad range of topics, headed by the embassy and our ambassador and the commanding general, General Petraeus. They're working hard at coming up with what is the right agreement from the two countries to have after the United…the United Nations Security Resolution is over on December the 31st. I'm not sure what that will look like; they're still in the process of discussing it. But I do know that detention is an important part of how the two countries will go forward. There will be many matters that they have to consider, many issues that they have to discuss. And I think we just want to wait and see how those good people do those good discussions and where it ends up. But it is possible in any one of those alternatives that one government may play a role and another government may play a role. But we'll just have a wait and see. Sir? We're going to go this way.

REP3 (Speaking in Arabic)

INT (Unintelligible)…the satellite Turkomen TV. Is there a specific time limit for detention? Is there a time…like a time limit to investigate or interrogate? And how…when…when do you start interrogating or investigating? Some of these detainees have been detained for a long time and nobody has investigated or

interrogated them while they're in detention.

MG STONE All detainees—100 percent of the detainees—go through a process that allows for them to be interviewed and/or interrogated at the time that they come into detention. The interrogation process is run by staff that work for me. And I think that we have exceeded 29,000 interrogations. These interrogations are discussions. They sit down in a room; the room is located here in Baghdad…rooms…actually, for many officials, we let them observe them. And they ask for information. And the detainees give us valuable information about how the operations are running. So, they've all been engaged in a form of discussion. One hundred percent of all their cases, with all the information that we have, have been reviewed. Not all the cases have the kind of evidence that might work in an Iraqi court system—and as I said earlier, only about 10 percent of all the cases that…of all the detainees—have cases with evidence that the Iraqis would assume appropriate to be in…as a violation of an Iraqi crime inside the Iraqi court system. So the answer is: they're all met, they're all interviewed. Not all of them are deeply interrogated because, frankly, not all of them have a lot of information. But all of their cases are reviewed. We don't ever let a detainee go longer than six months without, now, a personal meeting with coalition members who discuss the conditions under with…under which they were detained…collect more information, and assist them in the process of preparing themselves to be released and to be reintegrated into society. Thank you. Yes, sir.

REP4 (Speaking in Arabic)

INT (Inaudible). Have you had a…where you have released any of the foreign fighters in your release programs?

MG STONE Yes. Foreign fighters, or those that are labeled "third-country nationals"…and there…there is a distinction. The third-country nationals that we have are, oftentimes in cooperation with the Government of Iraq and another country, better served to be kept in that other country. And the Government of Iraq is very interested in working with its…some neighboring countries to re-pat and put these individuals back. So yes, on occasion, some of these individuals, through the cooperation of the government, are replaced back in other countries. The question of how much, when, is really a question for the Government of Iraq. But when the Government of Iraq feels that it's the appropriate thing, we work together on that and we replace them. It's not a big number today. But one would assume that of the 240 or so, a lot of them will go back as those countries systematically prepare their own countries to receive individuals who are ideological war fighters. And that's different sometimes than somebody who's just committed a crime. And many of the other countries that we could talk about at a later time are investing heavily in how to create programs—in some respects, not unlike those that we have—that recognize the need to work very closely with these detainees, to articulate the arguments they have and engage with them, and then once again, put them back into society to be functional members of the society. Yes, sir.

Let's go all the way to the back there.

REP5 (Speaking in Arabic)

INT [Unintelligible] from…every six months you review the cases of the detainees by a specific…Don't you think this is a very long time to have their cases reviewed every six months? What do you think, sir?

MG STONE The six-month review period is mandated by the Government of Iraq's law. So, we comply with the law. What is true is that we oftentimes review much sooner than that. There are situations—not infrequently—that a detainee will be in theater-level detention where a Government of Iraq official or a member of the community, in conjunction with the coalition forces, will say, "You know, I want to understand better the conditions under which this detainee is there." And they'll then ask for us to review that. And so—while I don't know the exact percentage—I know it happens a lot. And we look at those cases before six months. So, it's a good question that I'm going to get the answer to for the next press conference, because my guess is that the number on how long they really stay is much less than six months…I'm sorry, the review cycle is actually much less. But it's a legal requirement to do it every six months, and we comply with that legal requirement. Sir? Right behind . . .

REP6 (Speaking in Arabic)

INT From the Al-Zaman paper. We have…there's indicators that there is al-Qaeda…al- Qaeda leaders that are not…[He needs to repeat the question, sir] He's…he said that there's…I think there's al-Qaeda leaders that are not registered with the Red Cross. What is your…that have been sent out of Iraq. What is your answer to that? [I think I…this is what he said.] Then he said, "Do you have any comment on the multiple… the high number of rockets that hit the Green Zone this morning? Do you have any comments on that issue?"

MG STONE I want to be clear. I'm not 100 percent certain I understood the question. But let me give you an answer to the parts that I did understand. And then if I didn't catch your question, I would ask you to repeat it.

First of all, to my knowledge, we have no detainee—regardless of their affiliation—who, if asked to communicate to the International Red Cross, or the International Red Cross asked to communicate to them, were ever denied that; in fact, I would say it has never happened. So I don't think it's apply…it is not applied to any organization, regardless of whether or not it's al-Qaeda or somebody who is not affiliated in any manner. And as it relates to the rockets, I would defer to the…to others. I'm worried today about detainee operations. But did I answer your question, sir? Okay. Good.

FREEMAN Hello, Sholnn Freeman from the Washington Post. You said that you were holding more than you were a year ago, and I'd like the year-ago figure. And you

said that was partly explained by the surge. If you could just give me a little bit more detail about how that works. And then I have just some basic questions about how do you determine how long a person stays in detention, and who makes the selection to put someone in detention? Is it a soldier in the field or is it a commanding officer? If you could just give me some detail about how that works. Thanks.

MG STONE Okay. If you will not hold me to the exact number, I can tell you that at the beginning of the surge—and you can kind of pin the number down—but it was in approximately the April timeframe for me, last year, the number was about 16,000. That number, through the course of the surge, rose to just about 26,000. And I'm…I don't think we actually hit 26,000, but we were within a couple hundred, and close to it. Then, as the process showed on the chart, the release programs began to kick in, and the number of detainees who were being brought in from the Corps and those that were being released out through the Coprps back in the communities, changed. And so more were coming…or going out…than coming in. That drove the number down to the 23,000-plus that it's at today. It's a little bit of a level right now because of increased activities, particularly up in the north. But as those activities work themselves through, my expectation is that we'll go back into that sort of linear process and we'll begin to…to move the detainees through the process and out.

A detainee is detained through three different kind of levels. First of all, at the

battalion level, a detainee will come in, be asked questions, and oftentimes is released. A small percentage of those are moved up to the division. The division, through elaborate process, including those that are involved with interrogation, try to piece together the conditions under which they would want to make a recommendation that this individual would be detained at the Theater Internment Facility. And that period of time is, on balance, about two weeks that they are held accountable for getting that whole amount of questions and research and interrogation done. And then, if at the end of that period of time, they believe the detainee should be brought to the Theater Internment Facility, they're brought to me. We then review the conditions that are given to us by the division. All of the parameters that we see in the decision by a… usually it's a colonel-level commander…and there's various authorities all the way through there. But it's not the most junior of our forces who have the authority to detain; it's really the most senior. And so when they are finally judged to be someone who should come up to the Theater Internment Facility, then they come into my operation, and I have a legal team, the magistrate cell, that in conjunction with an Iraqi review board…that I mentioned earlier in my opening statement…review the case, look at the conditions, and then they ultimately make the recommendation that the individual should indeed go into detention. Now, when they come into detention, that review process continues. And as I mentioned before, in not less than every six months, they are…their case is reviewed. So, the fact of the matter is that a detainee, once they get into the Theater Internment Facility, has been through a lot of engagement, a lot of discussion. And when they get to the Theater Internment

Facility, it's only a matter of weeks before they're there. And then there's a small percentage at that magistrate's cell who release them and send them back out. And then the rest go into detention; they go in the process, and then they go through our…the steps that I mentioned…and then flow back out. Sir?

REP7 (Speaking in Arabic)

INT Sir, my question, concerning Iraqi detainees inside of American detention centers. How much can this detainee benefit from these programs? Are these…are these…the Iraqi detainees in the American prisons, are they going to be falling under this amnesty law or not? [And I missed the second half of his question.]

MG STONE You know, it's a…it's a good question on how much the detainee benefits. I will tell you that I meet with thousands of detainees every month. I was just at Bucca yesterday, actually, with members of the media. And I had a chance to talk to hundreds more who are getting their education, who are working on…in one of the job programs that we have. We have 23 different kinds of job programs. Hundreds and hundreds were meeting with their families during the day. In fact, we now have more than 3,000 families a week who are meeting with detainees. So, I don't know how much they benefit; but I do know that they go out healthier. They go out with the potential of having an education. They go out with an understanding of why the coalition force felt that they needed to be interned in the first place, because they've had a chance to talk to the individuals who made the

decision, the judgment, to detain them. So my sense of it is that it is a pretty fair deal. And my sense in talking to these thousands of detainees is that they feel the same way. But I think it's better if you talk to them. And that's why our next…when we announce our next monthly announcement…I mean our ceremonial release…where…and I think I see some faces who have been there before…but where you're all encouraged to come out. I encourage you to go up and ask the detainees themselves. They will tell you the answer to your question. My answer is it's looking pretty good. They end up better. Let me give you an interesting little data point. And I don't want to say that this is a trend. But you know, in the last three or four months we've had to develop a new process. And the new process is because some of the detainees have asked to stay in detention, to complete a course, to do something that was going on. And then, even though they have been voted for release, they've asked to stay for a period of time until something in their life took place, and then they go out. This started as a side note with many of the parents of the youth that we had in detention asking us if we account keep them there. So it's not always the way we think about it. And that being said…and that's why I don't want to misrepresent…the detainees want to go home. We want them to go back to their families. We want them to go back to the society. What we don't want is for them to engage in counter coalition activities anymore. And that's the agreement that they make when they sign the pledge with a judge from Iraq—it's an Iraqi judge—who asks them, and they say "yes," to a pledge. And to date, they have kept their word on this in big numbers. And we want to thank them for doing that. But more importantly, we want to be

clear: When a detainee is viewed as no longer a threat to the coalition and to the country of Iraq and to the goals of our two nations, they go home to be with their families. And we have time for one more question. And if you already had one…if you already had one…we can do this after…All the way in back, sir.

REP8 (Speaking in Arabic)

INT [Unintelligible] from Biladi Satellite Station. Even though you had mentioned -- You talked about the violence that is in the prisons by extremists, we hear news that Iraqi detainees are being exposed to very severe violence that usually…that has them disabled by the Taqfirists or the extremists in this…these prisons. What is your explanation for this phenomena, and what…what can you do to stop this from happening? My other question is there's news that…are talking about building a huge prison in Nasiryah. Do you have any information about this prison that's being built?

MG STONE I want to make sure we're getting the two systems clear here. The Iraqi prison system, underneath the Iraqi law—where the Iraqi court system makes a verdict with the evidence and puts them in prison—is different than coalition detention. Coalition detainees, in my parlance, are not prisoners. They haven't been sentenced. They are civilian internees judged to be an imperative security risk at the moment. But as time goes on and they work and we understand each other, the same judgment that got them into detention can get them out of detention. So

those are two very different systems. But as I mentioned in my opening comments, we have had a limited number of extreme violent detainee-on-detainee violence take place. In all cases where that has happened, we have responded immediately, provided, in at least one case in the last year that I know of, life-saving response. The guards have been immediate and changed their procedures so that now we do assessments; we place individuals in the correct…or in a…an opportunity that we think they'll better survive…better…they'll be safer. And now, with these new facilities that we pointed out, we're pulling out the real extremists who have the intention to try to provide intimidation. We're pulling them out and putting them into these facilities. And that's why our numbers are virtually nothing any longer in terms of the kinds of…detainee-on-detainee violence. So the assessments, the new facilities, are aiding that. But they're two systems. So, with that answer, I have no facility being built in Nasiryah. And I would ask you on the prison system, to talk to the good people at the Ministry of Justice.

I think that completes. . . (Speaking in Arabic).

INT I thank you…I thank all of you for you time and your attendance. And I would like to take this…this chance by giving an invitation to you to visit our centers. And thank you.